



# Introduction



- **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

- Effective learning requires an open exchange of ideas. Policies of academic freedom and non-attribution create an environment where students and faculty are able to engage in a meaningful dialogue without fear of retribution.
- A policy of **academic freedom** means that you may express your opinions concerning current or proposed policies, regulations and procedures openly and honestly. It does not mean that you may attack the character, personality or other personal attributes of any individual. Personal attacks will not be tolerated.
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***Educating the World's Best Air Force***

**The School Of Systems  
and Logistics**

**Executive Seminar**

**“An Expatriate’s Perspective  
of the Middle East”**

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**with  
Dr. Jan Muczyk**

***Strength Through Education***





# ASSUMPTIONS



**When generalizing to the Middle East or the Islamic world, one needs to be very careful:**

- **Whereas women cannot even drive automobiles in Saudi Arabia, they can do just about everything men can do in Oman.**
- **Alcohol and pork are readily available in Oman and Dubai but not in Saudi Arabia.**
- **Christian churches and Hindu temples legally exist in Oman, while practicing a religion other than Islam in your own home would be a risky proposition in Saudi Arabia.**



# Divisions within Islam



**With the split between the Sunni and Shia being the most pronounced:**

- There are divisions within the Sunni branch as well, with the Wahabi sect being the most puritanical and, thus, most appealing to extremists.
- Omanis, by and large, are neither Sunni nor Shia, but Ibadis.
- Differences between Arabs also exist on the basis of age, social class, and between city dwellers and their village compatriots.



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# Middle East and Islam not Coterminalous



- The most populous Islamic countries are:
  - 1) Indonesia
  - 2) Pakistan
  - 3) India
  - 4) Bangladesh
- None of these nations is in the Middle East or is Arabic.
- Other large Islamic countries are Turkey, Malaysia , and Iran.  
Again, none of these is Arabic.
- The most populous Middle Eastern, Arabic country is Egypt.



# Church and State are not Separate



- The Koran offers normative prescriptions for the totality of life, and there is very little departmentalization so far as life domains are concerned.
- Consequently, Islam lends itself to theocratic types of governments, and theocracies constitute among the most oppressive of governments.
- The importance of this separation was appreciated by Kemal Ataturk, and the creation by him of a secular, democratic state in Turkey is his greatest achievement.



# Culture versus Religion



**In the Middle East, it is difficult to separate culture from religion:**

- **A good example is the way women dress. The female dress code is largely a product of the Mediterranean culture as opposed to Koranic precepts.**
- **The Prophet's first wife, Khadijah, was a widow who successfully carried on her deceased husband's business.**
- **One of the Prophet's wives, Aisha, led troops into battle on camelback.**
- **Yet women do not have a role in commerce or the armed forces of most Arab States.**
- **A strong argument can be made that excluding women as equal partners in commercial affairs is in a significant part responsible for the poverty in the Arab world.**



# Democracy in the Middle East



**Western critics of the Arab world have noted repeatedly that the only democracy in the Middle East is modern Israel**

- **But modern Israel was founded by Europeans -- the Ashkenazi Jews -- who brought the European parliamentary system with them.**
- **The touchstone of good government in that part of the world has never been democracy, but justice.**
- **Democracy, after all, is a Western innovation.**
- **Thus, it should come as no surprise that there is no democratic legacy in the Middle East.**



# Middle East Leaders



**However, according to traditions established by the early Caliphs--successors to Mohammed, and either his close friends or relatives:**

- **The autocrat ruled so long as he was on “good behavior.”**
- **That is, so long as the ruler treated his subjects in an even-handed way, honored their traditions, did not publicly flaunt the Koran, and did not levy onerous taxes, he was considered a just ruler with the right to govern for life.**
- **Clearly, that is no longer the case. Arab leaders rule for life either as hereditary monarchs or through the one party system.**



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# Middle East Leaders



- **Most rulers in the Middle East are quite insecure, and for good reason.**
- **The threats come from those who want a more equitable distribution of income, and from those who would like to see an Islamic theocracy.**
- **As a result, Arab states possess large military and internal security establishments, the cost of which contributes to the immiseration of the general population, especially in states sans oil and/or natural gas.**



# Impacts of Oil/Natural Gas



- **Significant differences exist between countries with oil and/or natural gas (the so called “rentier” economies) and those devoid of oil and/or natural gas.**
- **Disparities in wealth and who does the work in the country also is a major difference.**
- **Practically all the work in the “oil sheikhdoms” is done by expatriates: mostly from the Indian subcontinent and Philippines.**
- **Consequently, the indigenous population is in danger of losing its work ethic, if it hasn’t lost it already.**
- **In the long-run, when oil and natural gas reserves are depleted, these fossil fuels may very well have turned out to be a curse.**



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# Middle Eastern Biases



- **Historically, the Arab world viewed anyone who was not a Muslim as inferior, and anything that is not Islamic as not worthwhile having.**
- **Women are subordinated to men. Their purpose is to make men happy, mostly by having babies.**
- **Obviously, there are plenty of exceptions. Ironically, the most powerful person in an extended Arab family is the mother of the eldest son, and in whose home she frequently resides.**



# Middle Eastern Biases

## Cont'd



- **Clearly, the Arabic, Islamic world had a superior culture while Europe was mired in the “Dark Ages.”**
- **However, when Europe became ascendant, Arabs refused to recognize reality and learn from Europe.**
- **Among Islamic nations, the best example of a country that decided to learn from the West is Turkey.**



# Problems with the West



- **Blaming yourself for your own problems is not part of the human condition; blaming others, however, is.**
- **As Arab civilizations started to wane, the blame was first placed on the Mongols, then on the Ottoman Turks, thirdly on the Europeans (mostly on the British and the French), and most recently on the U.S.**
- **The superpower “du jour” is always a convenient target for those who aren’t doing well and who feel aggrieved.**
- **The U.S. should not ask the question: “Why aren’t we loved?” That is just not in the cards. The important questions that need to be asked and answered are: “Why aren’t we respected, and why aren’t we feared?”**



# History of the Area



- **Arab suspicion of the West and Christianity can be traced to the Crusades of the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, even though most of the Crusades resulted in decisive Arab victories.**
- **Ironically, the Arabs conveniently overlook the numerous assaults preceding the first Crusade (1096 C.E.) on the West, the Byzantines, and Christianity everywhere; many of which were successful, and could easily be viewed as provocations.**
- **In fact, by the time the first crusade was launched, the Jihad against the West and Christianity was about 500 years old.**
- **President George W. Bush learned an important lesson regarding Arab sensitivities when at first he referred to the war on terrorism as a crusade.**



# History of the Area Cont'd



- All that was turned on its head, however, when Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798-99 with a small force, and only Horatio Nelson, another European, could dislodge him.
- The conquest of the Arabs by the Ottoman Turks was not the same since they too were Muslims.
- This lesson of European superiority was reinforced after WWI, when with the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the Middle East became a European protectorate.
- Whatever doubts Arabs may have had regarding Western science and U.S. military prowess were removed by the Persian Gulf War with Iraq.



# Arab Feelings



- **Many Arabs, much like many of the French, believe that their civilization is besieged by the rapid spread of the English language and American culture.**
- **Numerous Arabs are envious of Western science, Western economic success and the Western system of higher education that makes both possible.**
- **Perhaps that is why many Arabs go to the U.S and Europe to study, and why American and European professors are the most preferred in most Arab universities.**
- **Some Arabs are even convinced that there is a conspiracy by the industrialized nations to keep the prices of oil and natural gas low in order to deprive Arabs of their non-renewable patrimony. They refuse to accept market forces as an explanation.**



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# Cognitive Dissonance in the Arab World



- According to Islam, Mohammed was the last and greatest prophet, yet a relatively small number of Israelis, followers of an earlier and lesser prophet, Moses, hold the upper hand in the Middle East against the entire Arab world.
- Europe and North America, populated mostly by followers of another earlier and less significant prophet, Jesus, have created the most influential civilization for the past hundreds of years, while the Arab civilization has been falling behind for centuries. So naturally many Arabs ask: “How could that be?”
- Ironically enough, both Moses and Jesus are recognized in Islam as prophets, and many Arab Muslims name their children after them.



# Paradox



- **To be sure, for many Arabs there is a love/hate relationship with the U.S., with the hate directed at the U.S. government and its policies.**
- **It is interesting to note and somewhat difficult to explain why in certain Muslim countries where the government-to-government relations are strained or even adversarial the people like and respect Americans and the American way.**
- **This I call the Iranian paradox.**
- **Conversely, why is it that in other countries where government-to-government relations are cordial, the people harbor considerable animosity toward Americans and the American way?**
- **This I refer to as the Saudi Arabian paradox.**



# Business



- **Most educated Arabs, even in oil-rich sheikdoms, believe that there is no choice to long-term prosperity but to emulate Western capitalism.**
- **However, such a consensus does not exist regarding Western-style democracy. Unfortunately for the Arabs, the two go together; at least empirically, if not theoretically.**
- **In many Arab countries business monopolies are granted to those who are close to the source of power, thereby skewing income distribution toward the few.**
- **Moreover, all businesses must be registered in the name(s) of a national.**
- **Membership in the World Trade Organization, (many Arab states are applying) may improve this situation**



# Conclusion



- **U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis Israel and the Palestinians constitutes a prism through which everything else is seriously distorted in the Middle East.**
- **According to most Arabs, not only are the Israelis living on Palestinian land, but rub salt on the wound, the Ashkenazi Jews created a modern, democratic Western state in the midst of the Arab world; thereby precipitating the so-called culture clash.**
- **The U.S. will continue to face daunting challenges in the region and, to a lesser extent, among the non-Arabic co-religionists in the rest of the world, until there is peace between Israelis and Palestinians that the Arab world deems reasonably just.**
- **Doing a better job of educating Muslims that the U.S. is their friend will not work since their minds are already made up, and they refuse to be convinced by facts.**



# Conclusion Cont'd



- **For better or worse, huge oil reserves and the dependence of the West on them make the Middle East what it is on the contemporary, international scene.**
- **In return for the oil, the U.S. guarantees oil sheikdoms protection from enemies.**
- **So long as the West depends so heavily on Middle Eastern oil, it has little choice but to extend that protection.**
- **Consequently, the oil sheikdoms can do as they please, as long as oil flows to industrialized nations.**



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# Conclusions Cont'd



- **Therefore, pursuing the goal of energy independence with the same dedication as prosecuting a war, regardless of the price of oil at the moment, is the only viable strategy that in time will gain the U.S. appreciable leverage over oil sheikhdoms.**
- **Furthermore, North America, Europe, and Japan should begin conditioning their relationships with autocratic regimes in the region on progress being made toward just rule:**
  - **Which is a precondition to the creation of open societies**
  - **In the long-run, will lead to democratization and universal enfranchisement**
  - **Which in the final analysis are the solution to many of the stresses and strains between the West and the Middle East, as well as to the prosperity of the region.**



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